UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1999/458
21 April 1999

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 20 APRIL 1999 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF YUGOSLAVIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to forward herewith a letter from Zivadin Jovanovic, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, of 18 April 1999, on the environmental disaster caused by the NATO aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, addressed to you (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIC
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

99-11485 (E) 210499

/...

Annex

Letter dated 18 April 1999 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the Government and the people of Yugoslavia, I should like to advise that, in addition to unforeseeable civilian casualties and destruction, the weeks-long aggression of the NATO forces against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has already caused an ecological catastrophe, threatening the lives of millions of citizens in Yugoslavia, its neighbouring countries and in Europe.

The daily wanton destruction of installations of chemical, oil and pharmaceutical industries by the NATO aggressor in the immediate vicinity of big cities, such as Belgrade, with two million residents, Novi Sad, Pristina, Pancevo, Subotica, Smederevo, Cacak and Krusevac, releases huge quantities of hazardous substances, endangering people, air, soil and all living beings. The latest example is last night's bombing of the industrial chemical installations in Belgrade, Pancevo, Novi Sad and Baric, which resulted in the release of large quantities of ammonia, oil and the burning of stocks of chemicals used in plastics and fertilizer industries and created clouds of poisonous gases hovering above those cities and beyond.

Thousands of citizens of Yugoslavia have been forced to seek medical assistance in the past days following gas poisoning caused by the bombing of chemical installations in Yugoslavia. This is yet another illustration of a crime against humanity caused by the NATO aggressors. Potential dangers of the numerous consequences are being studied.

Previous bombings of oil refineries in Novi Sad, Belgrade and Pancevo caused an oil spill on the Danube 15 kilometres long and 400 metres wide, threatening the flora and fauna of that European economic, tourist and ecological inland water route and of the Black Sea.

Big European rivers - the Danube and the Sava - are also threatened, as are the Black, Adriatic and Mediterranean Seas.

The national parks on Mt. Kopaonik, Mt. Tara, Mt. Durmitor, Mt. Zlatibor, Divcibare, Mt. Crni Vrh and many others have also been targeted by the NATO aggressor, causing, in addition to the destruction of civilian facilities, a series of forest fires, which have resulted in lasting damage to the unique ecosystem in that part of Europe.

The bombing of facilities on the coast and the dumping of waste have threatened the waters and coasts of the Adriatic and of Lake Skadar at the border between Yugoslavia and Albania.

Particularly dangerous is the fact that NATO aggressors have begun to fly A-10 type aircraft in recent days, which use depleted uranium ammunition. On the basis of the results of the tests of the British laboratory "Comhill", it

has been established that this ammunition is the cause of the "Gulf syndrome", leukaemia and anomalies in newborn children.

The burning and exhaust gases released in more than 6,000 sorties flown by NATO planes from the air bases and aircraft carriers in the Adriatic and the Mediterranean and by the more than 10,000 tons of highly destructive explosives used by NATO aggressors in the aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia so far, deplete the ozone layer, cause permanent pollution of the soil, farm land and waterways and unforeseeable and lasting damage to the entire population, flora and fauna, not only in Yugoslavia, but in south-eastern Europe and the entire Mediterranean basin.

The escalation of the aggression and ever more frequent instances of dropping bombs on the territories of a number of neighbouring countries - Bulgaria, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy (Lake Garda) - increase the risk of causing environmental damage throughout Europe as well.

I am addressing you in the expectation that, within your responsibilities, you will urgently take all necessary measures with a view of bringing about an immediate end to the NATO aggression and preventing even more serious ecological consequences to the wider region of Europe and the Mediterranean, especially in the interest of protecting people, air, water, food, forests and national parks.

I look forward to an appropriate involvement of the United Nations and its agencies, the United Nations Environment Programme in particular, along the lines of "Agenda 21" from the Rio de Janeiro conference.

(Signed) Zivadin JOVANOVIC